

EDITED BY
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FOR C. H. P. STEWART, is our authorized agent for collecting accounts due this office, and for obtaining new subscribers in Virginia.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL.

The House of Representatives, yesterday, passed, by a majority of sixty-one votes, the joint resolution from the Senate, authorizing the President of the United States to confer the title of brevet lieutenant general for meritorious military services; the design being thus to compliment Major General Scott.

NAVY BILLS.

This day, it will be remembered, has been set apart by the House of Representatives, at the instance of the chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, for the consideration of important public measures relating to the Navy, which have been considered and matured by the naval committees.

The country, in its length and breadth, has given unmistakable evidence of the deep interest it takes in the discussion of those measures in Congress which have for their object the renovation, improvement, and increased efficiency of the Navy in all its branches; and it must be admitted that the Navy itself, and its friends, look with great anxiety to the result of this day's proceedings in the House of Representatives.

Among the bills which have of late occupied the attention of the committees and of the Department, the three following may be considered of most pressing necessity at this time, viz:

The Discipline bill;
The bill authorizing the construction of seven steam sloops of war; and
The bill to promote the efficiency of the Navy.

These three measures have been so ably discussed, and the necessity for speedy legislative action upon them, so clearly demonstrated in high official quarters, that it would seem like temerity to attempt to add new facts, or adduce new arguments, to prove that upon the passage or rejection of them depends the early reinvigoration or the rapid decadence of the once vigorous and improving, but now rapidly declining, and prematurely old, Navy of the country.

The passage of the first bill named, it is believed, is of unquestionable necessity in the opinion of those who, from high official position and from professional duties, have had the best means of arriving at correct conclusions. Discipline is of vital importance to the harmony, comfort, health, well-being, and efficiency of the personnel of the service. Without it, our ships cannot be credibly and safely managed at sea, nor displayed at home nor abroad without humiliation, and in the hour of need no amount of nautical skill and personal bravery, uncontrolled by a proper discipline, can avert defeat and disgrace.

The necessity for the passage of the second bill (for seven small steamers of war) seems to be so self-evident, to say nothing of the very cogent and unanswerable reasons which have been given by the Hon. Secretary of the Navy to Congress, that it is believed no one who is at all aware of the present very limited number of available vessels at the disposal of the Department for keeping up and relieving our present small force afloat, can fail to recognize the absolute necessity for this nominal (but not actual, as has been shown by the Department,) increase in the number of our vessels of war.

It is to the third and last named bill (to promote the efficiency of the Navy) that it is the chief object of this article to invite attention.

For many years the country, the Department, and the Navy have been looking anxiously to Congress for the passage of measures of reform. That the Navy is in as efficient a state as it is at this time, or, rather, that the entire naval establishment of the country has not long ago fallen to pieces, proves the wisdom and strength of its early organization and the character of those who carried it through the several wars in which we have been engaged with undiminished zeal and energy, and this, too, without any of these incentives which pertain to those military organizations, in which efficient service procures professional advancement.

The great evil under which the Navy is now suffering, arises from the stagnation in all the grades, and the utter hopelessness of an officer being advanced to the execution of responsible and important duties within the period of his greatest professional, mental, and physical efficiency.

There is an evil, the present extent of which, and the manner in which it is increasing, few are aware of, who have not carefully examined the subject.

If the individual officer alone suffered, the remedies proposed by this bill would be fitting and proper, but when we consider that the best interests of the country, and the proper efficiency of the Navy so loudly call for this reform, it becomes a measure of positive necessity.

One example will probably serve to illustrate what has been said above.

The enlarged views of the Executive branch of the Government, commencing under the administration of President Polk, and continued through the succeeding administrations, sustained by the liberal and enlightened spirit of Congress, have built up the finest Naval Academy in the world, and this claim to superiority cannot be denied by any intelligent person who is familiar with the subject.

The admirable system at this Institution, by which the academic studies and the practical instruction, ashore and afloat, are so perfectly combined as to insure the future development of the most accomplished and efficient naval officers.

But what return will the nation receive for this munificent endowment? Let us see.

The graduating class for the year 1854, the first under the new and improved system, are young men of nineteen years of age; they have to serve three years at sea, and then be examined in practical seamanship to complete their course, becoming passed midshipmen at the age of twenty-two, just the period of life to

commence their duties as lieutenants, in order to assume early the care and responsibility of office, and to call into requisition their recently well cultivated faculties. But, in lieu of this, they continue a weary probation of fifteen years in a most subordinate grade, and, at the age of thirty-seven, receive their commissions as lieutenants, and possibly, for the first time, assume the duties of a "watch officer." This, be it remembered, at an age when French and English officers are commanding frigates and line-of-battle ships, and somewhat older than our own captains when they fought the Navy into public favor.

But this is not the only probation, nor the worst; they will have to serve twenty-five years as lieutenants, and at the age of sixty-two will attain their first command.

It is needless to calculate when they will become captains and flag officers, though this calculation has been heretofore made; when it was found, after making a very liberal allowance for the vicissitudes and casualties of service, that those who lived to be eighty-five years of age, might become commodores. We firmly believe the Reform Bill, which is to be considered to-day, will remedy this most anomalous condition in the Naval Establishment, and that its provisions will accomplish this most desirable end, without taking a single additional cent from the Treasury, or adding a single officer to the aggregate number now in the service.

GEN. SHIELDS—THE FRUITS OF UNHOLY COALITIONS.

One of the evil results of the spread of un-sound doctrines and of the unholy leagues and coalitions that prevail, is the loss to the country of the services of some of the ablest and most sterling Democrats. A common ambition and a natural affinity have concurred to ally various factions, and to cement hitherto antagonistic factions. It is like the bond that binds together dishonest men, who, however much they may separately hate one another, have a yet stronger common hatred of those who are honest.

One of the last, as he is one of the noblest victims that has fallen beneath the axe of this traitorous coalition, is that gallant soldier and able statesman, General Shields, of Illinois. Such an execution, instead of degrading the victim, only gives an unenviable importance to the executioner. It is by such excesses, it is by striking down such shining virtues, that the opposition will attain a wider notoriety, and change what was an almost pitying contempt into a feeling of unmixed horror.

The butchers who have slain kings and drunk the blood of maiden princesses, have pleaded the generous fanaticism of the patriot in justification of the monstrous cruelties of the man. But they who strike down the devoted Tribunes of the people, the steadfast friends of the Constitution and of the institutions of the States, those who are our heroes in war and our statesmen in peace, can plead no such generous plea as patriotism.

Senator Shields is a victim to his adherence to the Constitution, his support of the Nebraska bill, and his sound, unwavering, and unimpaired Democracy. Such martyrdom is verily a crown of glory. It sheds a new lustre on the martyr, and covers his persecutors with a new odium.

The trading politicians, the foul Abolitionists, the clandestine Know-nothings, of Illinois, all combined to defeat the re-election of General Shields to the Senate. They have accomplished their object. Can sound men, either in the North or the South boast of the exploit? We think not. Can the Whigs of the South who are fast joining the new secret order, deem his defeat their triumph? We think not. It is the defeat of those sacred guarantees with which the Constitution guarded the rights of the States. Such victories often repeated will altogether ruin the South.

It is not our habit to pay fulsome compliments and write sickening eulogiums. We leave that to our neighbor the "Poet Laureate," of the Union. We hope, always, to cherish independence, and loathe servility enough to guard us against undeserved or indiscriminate praise. When we pay a compliment, we mean it, and would scorn ourselves if we were impelled by any other motive than a sincere desire to render a merited tribute.

NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE.

A correspondent, writing to us, under date of January the 20th, from Omaha city, in the new Territory of Nebraska, gives the following interesting account of the meeting, organization, and proceedings of the Legislature of Nebraska:

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
OMAHA CITY, N. T., Jan. 20, 1855.

On the 16th instant both branches of the Nebraska Legislature convened here pursuant to a proclamation of Acting Governor Cumming. Much excitement has prevailed throughout the Territory during the past few months in regard to the temporary location of the capitol, the mode of operating in such location, and the action of the Acting Governor during the late election. The opening of the Legislature was to have been the grand scene of conflicting elements. In the council five members—a minority—at an early hour convened the council and proceeded, without delay, to temporarily organize and proceed to business. The majority came in a short time, but, preferring as quiet an organization as circumstances would permit, allowed the minority to continue in progress. The President pro tem—H. P. Bennett—indulged in much abuse against the Acting Governor's course, and in company with a number of members from both houses, refused to take the oath, as administered subsequent to the delivery of the able message delivered before both houses jointly convened. The associate Judge of the Territory was called in and administered the oath. Much excitement prevailed in both houses. Contestants for seats claimed the right to act and vote. The lobby, crowded to overflowing by spectators, was somewhat noisy. The Acting Governor, during the excitement, appeared upon the council floor and threatened to convene it himself unless different procedure was resorted to, but was promptly called to order by the chair, and, after a brief and angry session, the council adjourned until the following day. The house session was not quite as stormy, and business under the guidance of M. Latham, speaker, proceeded far better than was generally expected, and adjourned at an early hour in the afternoon until the following morning.

Much difficulty was apprehended in the morning session, but morning broke and the storm of disorganization seemed to have subsided to some extent and both Houses, at an early hour, succeeded in effecting a thorough organization. In the Council, J. L. Sharpe was nominated and unanimously elected president; G. J. Mil-

ler was elected Secretary; F. Lake assistant Secretary, and S. A. Lewis sergeant-at-arms. In the House, J. L. Hanson was elected speaker; J. W. Paddock 1st clerk; J. C. Eayre 2d clerk, and J. L. Gibbs sergeant-at-arms. The Territory, as all know who are conversant with Nebraska news, is divided into a number of conflicting interests. The north and south of the Platte in rivalry, lead the van; and whilst the census returns show a majority on the south side of that river the north side of that river has a majority of representation in both Houses. In the House and Council there is a respectable majority of Nebraska Democrats, and resolutions sustaining the Nebraska and Kansas bill and endorsing the fundamental principles of the Democratic party as embodied in the present administration will certainly pass, corresponding, if not the same, with the accompanying joint resolution just now presented by my friend General Robinson, from Bart County.

The Governor's message also I enclose to you. Business will now, I think, progress rapidly. The appointment of M. Latham to the governorship to succeed F. Burt, deceased, gives universal satisfaction. He is expected daily.

The resolution above referred to is as follows:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Omaha, Nebraska Territory, Jan. 18, 1855.

Mr. Robertson of Bart, offered the following joint resolution, which was ordered to be laid upon the table and to be printed:

"Resolved, That we herewith endorse the principles enunciated in the bill organizing the Territory of NEBRASKA and KANSAS; that we rejoice that the geographical line between the northern and southern States has been erased, leaving the people of every State and Territory, free to control their domestic institutions; and that we commend the firm and patriotic course of the men, without distinction of party, who have labored to establish the sound constitutional principles of the compromise of 1850; and

"Resolved, Furthermore, That we pledge ourselves to oppose any unfair discriminations, such as those of the late Missouri Compromise; but to protect and defend the rights of the States, and the Union of the States; and to advance and perpetuate the doctrine of Popular Sovereignty."

NAVAL REFORM—AN EXPLANATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE SENATE BILL.

A correspondent, who signs himself "M. W.," has favored us with the following lucid explanation of the provisions of the Naval bill, which lately passed the Senate. He says:

"For many years successive Secretaries of the Navy, and the Naval Committees of Congress, have endeavored to suggest some plan by which the efficiency of the various grades of the officers of the navy might be secured without prejudice and injustice to the old and faithful. Every plan, however, for one reason or another, seemed objectionable; consequently, did not meet the favor so much needed and desired.

"The present Naval Committee of the Senate has, after due deliberation, at last hit upon a plan which gives general satisfaction to all those most concerned, who have properly considered the subject. The bill they have reported passed the Senate by unanimous consent, and now only requires the action of the House to make it a law. As there seems to be a misunderstanding as to its merits, I shall endeavor to explain the bill.

"This plan does not increase the aggregate pay of the officers one dollar, nor add one cent to the amount of the naval appropriation, nor does it reduce the pay of any one. Its only effect is to bring forward the young and efficient officers, and place those who from age or other causes are incompetent for active service on a 'reserved list' out of the line of promotion with their 'leave of absence pay,' which will give them a respectable and comfortable support.

"Their places will then be filled by younger and able officers, who when off duty will receive the 'leave of absence pay' of the grade from which they were promoted, and when on duty, the difference of pay between the 'leave of absence pay' of the retiring officer, and what his 'sea pay' would have been.

"Thus, for example, if a commander be placed on the 'reserved list,' he continues to receive the 'leave of absence pay' now allowed by law to that grade. This is \$1,800 per annum. The next competent Lieutenant is promoted, and receives his commission as Commander, but only gets, while unemployed, under the new commission, the 'leave of absence pay,' of his old grade, \$1,200. When on duty he will receive the difference of pay in addition, which the retiring Commander would have received between that of the leave of absence and sea pay, \$700, making the new Commander's whole compensation while in actual command, \$1,900.

"Thus it is easily to be seen that the pay of the two officers, collectively, remains the same, though differently distributed.

"This simple and just plan of reorganization should recommend itself to all whom it may concern, and without doubt will prove very beneficial to the service generally, and that without doing injustice to the old and faithful officers. It brings young and efficient men to responsible positions consistent with their years and acquirements, and makes them usefully known to the country before they become supernumerary."

Bulwer Lytton in Parliament.

The Liverpool Journal, in giving an account of the great debate on the Foreign Enlistment Bill, gives the following ungracious sketch of the most famous man in England:

"I think Sir Bulwer Lytton is the most ridiculous-looking man, with his horse nose, and his blue scrawny eyes, in her Majesty's dominions; and his low-wown voice drives one into hysterics of indignation; and his gestures—oh! his gestures; conceive Cassandra being dogmatic in a state of delirium tremens. The impression for the first five minutes of his oratory is awful; you see members during their faces with their handkerchiefs, screwing their persons to their benches, and keeping their eyes off the door that looks like tempting an escape from the tremendous baronet. But genius asserts itself, and one forgets the tremendous baronet in the man whose very grotesqueness but proves his grand originality; and forgetting the manner in the matter—when it is good, as on Tuesday—the house cheers. Sir Edward sat down, on that night with a parliamentary success, having achieved that, he is celebrated for his pertinacity, which he has been twenty years striving for; and as I watched him passing along the lobby to dinner, amid unreserved congratulations, I came to the conclusion that was the happiest moment of a career which, though less with laurels, has perhaps, been a very melancholy life."

THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT AND THE ENGLISH MINISTRY.

English pride and English prejudice have at last been before the stubborn facts which establish the complete failure of their arms in the Crimea. Parliament seems inclined, from its recent action, to visit its vengeance upon the ministry for gross incompetency, and culpable neglect, in the administration of the war. Lord John Russell, wise as the rat in the adage, who deserts the falling barn, has tendered his resignation, which has graciously been received by her majesty. His "hunc dimittis" is not exactly in the language of the ancient Simeon, for the burden of his song is—"now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for his eyes have not seen thy salvation in the Crimea."

For the benefit of our readers, we make the following extracts from the proceedings of the two houses on the 25th and 26th ultimo in regard to the conduct of the ministry:

"In the House of Lords, Thursday, January 25th, Lord Lyndhurst gave notice that on Friday, the 21st of February, he would move the following resolution:

"That in the opinion of this House the expedition to the Crimea was undertaken by her Majesty's government with very inadequate means, and without due caution or sufficient inquiry into the nature and extent of the resistance to be expected from the enemy; and that the neglect and mismanagement of the government in the conduct of the enterprise have led to the most disastrous results."

On the following day Lord Aberdeen, in a speech of some length, apprised the Lords of the resignation of Lord John Russell, stating his personal knowledge that for more than two months the noble Lord had expressed his dissatisfaction of the mode in which the war had been prosecuted. In the course of these remarks, Lord Aberdeen read the following letter, which throws some light upon the motives which actuated Lord Russell in this step:

"CHESHAM-PLACE, Jan. 23, 1855.

"MY DEAR LORD ABERDEEN.—Mr. Roebuck has given notice of a motion for the War Department to inquire into the conduct of the war. I do not see how this motion is to be resisted; but, as it involves a censure upon the War Department, I feel it my duty to state to you, my only confidant in this matter, that I have the honor to hold before the Queen, with the expression of my gratitude for her Majesty's kindness for many years past.

I remain, my dear Lord Aberdeen,

"Yours, very truly,

"J. RUSSELL."

Lord Russell's vindication of himself contained in the following extract of his speech before the House of Commons, strikingly illustrates the condition of the army in the Crimea. He had premised that there were but two positions which the ministry could assume to acquit them of the censure which they had received. The first, that the state of things charged by the enemies of the administration did not exist; and secondly, that if it did, it could not have been prevented by their action; that every means of human ingenuity and wisdom had been resorted to by the ministry to avert the catastrophe. In reply to these two grounds of apology, he says:

"No one can deny the melancholy condition of our army before Sebastopol. [Lord cries out of hear, hear.] The accounts which arrive from that quarter every week are not only painful, but horrible and heart-rending, [hear, hear;] and I am sure no one would oppose for a moment any measure that would be likely not only to cure, but to do anything to mitigate those evils. [Cheers.] Sir, I must say that there is something in the official knowledge to which I have had access, that to me is inexplicable in the state of our army. [Cheers.] If I had been told, as a reason against the expedition to the Crimea last year, that your troops would be seven miles from the sea, seven miles from a secure port—which at that time, when we had in contemplation the expedition, we had hoped to possess—that at that time seven miles of distance they would be in want of food, clothes, and of shelter, to such a degree that they would perish at the rate of from ninety to one hundred a day, I should have considered such a prediction as utterly preposterous, and such a picture of the expedition as entirely fanciful and absurd. [Hear, hear.] We are all, however, free to confess the melancholy state of our army at that time. [Hear, hear.] It was not, therefore, by denying the existence of the evils that I could hope to induce this House to reject the proposition of the honorable and learned gentleman; but I had further to reflect that I was in a position not to give a faint 'No' to the proposal—not to express in vague and equivocal language a wish that the expedition should not be carried out, or to use any evasion with respect to the letter of its terms with a view to defeat the motion. [Hear, hear.] It was my duty—a duty which, I trust, I have ever performed when in that situation—to stand in the front of the battle, and manfully to take my part in opposing the appointment of that committee. [Hear, hear.] Then, sir, I had to consider whether I might not give the second reason for refusing the committee to which I have alluded, viz: that measures had been taken, that arrangements were in progress, by which those evils would be remedied, and by which the administration of the war would be vigorously and, as was to be hoped, successfully prosecuted. Sir, I should have been more disposed to give that reason, because it is obvious that the consequences of the expedition on the subject—a committee sitting for weeks, perhaps for months—would be fatal to the efficiency of those military purposes which it would chiefly affect. There was, therefore, the strongest inducement, if possible, to put forward such an objection to the inquiry which the honorable and learned gentleman proposed to make; but, sir, I found upon reflection that it was impossible for me to urge with effect, and according to my own conscience, and with truth, that objection to the proposition for a committee. [Hear, hear.]

In the House of Commons on the 26th ult., the feeling against the ministry was even more decided and violent than in the peers. On that day "Mr. Roebuck rose to move for a select committee to inquire into the condition of our army before Sebastopol, and into the conduct of those departments of the government whose duty it has been to minister to the wants of our army. He observed, had been acknowledged by Lord J. Russell, who had confessed that he was unable, as a Minister of the Crown, to resist this motion; yet, in the same breath, he had declared that he should not support the motion by speech or vote. The question divided itself into two parts—first, what was the condition of the army before Sebastopol; the second, how that condition had been brought about? With respect to the condition of the army there could not be two opinions; all he had to do, therefore, was to submit to the House that inquiry was necessary to ascertain what were the causes by which that condition had been brought about. We had sent 54,000 soldiers properly equipped, who had done all they could to uphold the honor of the country. At present there were not more than 14,000 boys—

not before Sebastopol. What had become of the 40,000? He believed that the condition of the army had been brought about by the incapacity, at home and abroad, of those whose duty it was to minister to its wants."

A simple statement of facts, arranged in forcible language by Mr. Drummond, of the House of Commons, is still more powerful in its denunciation of the course of the Government. The history of the war affords no such example of gross ignorance, folly, and culpable neglect of an army engaged in the service of any country. The speech of Mr. Drummond is in reply to an apology of Sidney Herbert, in his opposition to the motion of Mr. Roebuck for a committee of inquiry. The defense of Mr. Herbert rested mainly upon the ground that the adoption of such a resolution would tend to paralyze the action of Government at home and abroad. He contended that the committee would either gain no information, or it would be obtained at the expense of the army. He said that the fault lay in the army system itself; that the English army was a collection of regiments, whose field officers had never seen a brigade, and were unacquainted with the organization of large bodies. He asked the House if it made up its mind to take this course, to avow it at once by a plain and intelligible decision. The Government stood in a precarious position; it had received a heavy blow by the secession of one of its most important members, and he hoped the House, considering well the course it ought to take, and the perils which surrounded the country, would decide the question at once and in plain language.

To this defense, Mr. Drummond replied in a speech of some length, from which we are only able to make the following extracts:

"The Right Hon. gentleman shall understand at least from me, plainly and intelligibly, that I do impute it to the gross incompetence of some man or men that an event has occurred without a parallel in history; that an army, three times victorious, has been left to perish, to be utterly destroyed, by the incompetence of those who ought to have supported it. The whole country is in wrath with some body, but no one seems to know who that somebody should be. [Hear, hear.] That is the plain question we want to have answered. Is this wrath confined to one party, or is there not a burst of indignation from one end of the kingdom to the other? Is it not re-echoed from Germany and from France? Is it not asked in all their papers, what can the English government be composed of? And was ever such cruelty exhibited towards its own army, as which they have treated their army? I should have thought the Right Hon. gentlemen themselves would be the very first to thank us for coming forward, and asking for information. I am not content to throw the blame on a government. I can understand that it is very decent, and proper and right for all gentlemen standing there to put themselves forward, in order to ascertain upon whom the blame is to be laid. Does any one mean to say that it is the fault of the Right Hon. gentleman that the army is starving? No; but it is the fault of the government. Does any one say that it is the fault of the noble lord? No; but it is that of the government. Why did the noble lord resign? Because he has not yet been able satisfactorily to ascertain upon whom the blame rests. My right honorable friend has completely evaded the question. I thought his speech the other night most conclusive for his own defense; the only fault I find with it, that it was too clever. It showed him to be a very eloquent man. Eloquence is a fine art, and I am sure no one would oppose for a moment any measure that would be likely not only to cure, but to do anything to mitigate those evils. [Cheers.] Sir, I must say that there is something in the official knowledge to which I have had access, that to me is inexplicable in the state of our army. [Cheers.] If I had been told, as a reason against the expedition to the Crimea last year, that your troops would be seven miles from the sea, seven miles from a secure port—which at that time, when we had in contemplation the expedition, we had hoped to possess—that at that time seven miles of distance they would be in want of food, clothes, and of shelter, to such a degree that they would perish at the rate of from ninety to one hundred a day, I should have considered such a prediction as utterly preposterous, and such a picture of the expedition as entirely fanciful and absurd. [Hear, hear.] We are all, however, free to confess the melancholy state of our army at that time. [Hear, hear.] It was not, therefore, by denying the existence of the evils that I could hope to induce this House to reject the proposition of the honorable and learned gentleman; but I had further to reflect that I was in a position not to give a faint 'No' to the proposal—not to express in vague and equivocal language a wish that the expedition should not be carried out, or to use any evasion with respect to the letter of its terms with a view to defeat the motion. [Hear, hear.] It was my duty—a duty which, I trust, I have ever performed when in that situation—to stand in the front of the battle, and manfully to take my part in opposing the appointment of that committee. [Hear, hear.] Then, sir, I had to consider whether I might not give the second reason for refusing the committee to which I have alluded, viz: that measures had been taken, that arrangements were in progress, by which those evils would be remedied, and by which the administration of the war would be vigorously and, as was to be hoped, successfully prosecuted. Sir, I should have been more disposed to give that reason, because it is obvious that the consequences of the expedition on the subject—a committee sitting for weeks, perhaps for months—would be fatal to the efficiency of those military purposes which it would chiefly affect. There was, therefore, the strongest inducement, if possible, to put forward such an objection to the inquiry which the honorable and learned gentleman proposed to make; but, sir, I found upon reflection that it was impossible for me to urge with effect, and according to my own conscience, and with truth, that objection to the proposition for a committee. [Hear, hear.]

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